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How the Vietnam War May Affect the Election

On both general and foreign-policy performance, the voters seem to prefer the Republicans—and thus 1968 may be a replay of 1952

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In attempting to determine how the Vietnam war will affect the 1968 election, we are immediately faced with a paradox. Vietnam may have a greater impact upon this election than any other issue has had upon any other election since World War II—perhaps greater than any issue since slavery in the election of 1860. At the same time, Vietnam may affect relatively few *votes,* and thus be judged of minor significance in affecting the outcome next month.

The first proposition stems from the assumption that President Johnson could have had his party's nomination if he had wanted it. No incumbent President in this century has been denied this minimum vote of confidence—not even Herbert Hoover when, as H. Douglas Price points out, "he was the only *fully* employed man in America." I do not know when the President stopped wanting renomination—this will have to await the publication of his "million-dollar memoir." But it seems reasonably sure that the war, and the public's response to his handling of the war, entered into his decision.

Consider the state of the mass public in 1968—a fact of political life of which the President could not have been unaware. At the time of his withdrawal speech in March, public approval of the President's Vietnam policy was at an all-time low (26 percent); the President had not had majority support in the polls since April 1966; and, with the exception of May 1967, the polls had not recorded a plurality of "approvers" since December 1966.

The President has made it abundantly clear that, for him, public opinion does not make public policy. But policy-makers can be elected or defeated by the feelings behind responses to opinion surveys. And the public mood in March did not bode well for November.

Public-opinion trends are, of course, far from the complete story. If the war had been going well, the President could expect that, once the public had been informed, Vietnam could have been turned from an electoral deficit into an asset. The Tet offensive must have aborted this expectation. After Tet, it became hard to deny that the public's view of the war had more to commend it than the generals'.

The public's response to the war, America's poor showing in the war itself, and the link between war-spending and domestic unrest have already had a profound effect on the 1968 election. Not only have they contributed to a President's removing himself

"All the Way with L.B.J." reads a sarcastic sign held by this New York City peace demonstrator.

from the contest; they have also created centers of opposition within the incumbent's party, and they have given voters an issue on which to focus. If, in addition, we accord Vietnam a role in the crisis of the cities, we would have to say that it has given the voters their *two* most salient issues.How is it possible, then, to believe that Vietnam may affect relatively few votes in November?

Let us consider what we know about the determinants of the voting act—or the "formula" for voting behavior. In this formula we can place information about the current state of the war, the status of the Paris negotiations, and such information on public opinion as is available. Within fairly broad limits, these steps will allow us to preview the role of the Vietnam issue in the 1968 election.

Voting and Foreign-Policy Issues

The investigation of why people vote the way they do has been of interest to American scholars for a long

FROM STRONG DEMOCRAT TO STRONG REPUBLICAN (Table 1)
Distribution of Party Identifications

	Party Identification							
	Democrat		Independent			Republican		
Year	Strong	Weak	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Weak	Strong	Other
1952	22%	25%	10%	5%	7%	14%	13%	4%
1954	22	25	9	7	6	14	13	4
1956	21	23	7	9	8	14	15	3
1958	23	24	7	8	4	16	13	5
1960	21	25	8	8	7	13	14	4
1962	23	23	8	8	6	16	12	4
1964	26	25	9	8	6	13	11	2
1966	18	28	9	12	7	15	10	1
1968	18	22	9	17	8	13	11	2

Source: Arthur Wolfe, "Some Results of the 1966-67 Election Study" (Memorandum, Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, May 25, 1967). The 1968 data are from the Stanford/Pittsburgh Survey.

time; analytic studies, using survey-generated data, go back to the 1940s with the pioneering efforts of the Bureau of Applied Social Research (Columbia) and the Survey Research Center (Michigan). A major conclusion of these studies can be summarized by the following relatively well-confirmed proposition: *People vote the way they do primarily because of the way they feel about the political parties—their "party identification."*

Party identification is defined by the Michigan group as "the sense of personal attachment the individual feels toward the [political] group of his choice." It is customary to classify party identifications into seven categories, running from "strong Democrat" to "strong Republican," with three groups of Independents. Table 1 gives the percentages of Americans in these categories over the past 16 years, covering eight Presidential and off-year elections.

Four things are noteworthy about this table:

- For a decade (1952-1962), the distribution of basic political loyalties among American voters was remarkably stable;
- the Goldwater candidacy was accompanied by a significant rise in the percentage of "strong" Democrats;
- since 1964, there has been a significant drop-off in the percentage of "strong" Democrats, not only from the 1964 high, but also from the average for 1952 through 1964; and
- of late, there appears to be a trend towards independence and away from identification with either party.

These changes are not trivial, for—as Table 2 shows—a person's party identification is strongly related to his vote. And if the trend toward weaker party identification continues, it may signal a radical change in people's voting behavior.

Now, as noted, the percentages of "strong" Democrats, "weak" Republicans, and so on, have been rather stable in recent years. And yet election outcomes have been a mixed bag, with Democrats winning one election, Republicans the next. Therefore, while party identifications are indispensable for explaining how people vote, they are of limited usefulness in explaining any *particular election*. Sometimes, in fact, it is the switch from party identifications that decides an election. Clearly, then, additional factors must be found to help explain election results.

These other factors have been sought in six general areas:

1. The voter's attitude about the Democratic candidate as a person;
2. His attitude about the Republican candidate as a person;
3. His attitude about the stance of the parties and candidates on helping various groups, like businessmen or Negroes;
4. His attitude about the stance of the parties and candidates on domestic policy;
5. His attitude about the stance of the parties and candidates on foreign policy; and
6. His attitude about the performance of the parties in the nation's affairs.

VOTING THE PARTY LINE (Table 2)
Relation of Party Identification to Presidential Vote

	Party Identification				
	Democrat		Independent*	Republican	
Year/Vote	Strong	Weak		Weak	Strong
1952					
Eisenhower	16%	38%	67%	94%	99%
Stevenson	84	62	33	6	1
1956					
Eisenhower	15	37	73	93	99
Stevenson	85	63	27	7	1
1960					
Nixon	9	29	54	87	98
Kennedy	91	71	46	13	2
1964					
Goldwater	5	18	34	57	90
Johnson	95	82	66	43	10

Source: Data gathered by the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan; made available through the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research.
* The three categories of Independents are collapsed together.

These "partisan attitudes" are by no means independent, and the extent of their interdependence complicates any analysis of people's voting decisions. Moreover, scholars disagree on the question of *causality* among these partisan attitudes. Does a voter like (say) a Democratic candidate *because* that voter approves of the candidate's views on foreign policy, or does the voter approve of the candidate's foreign-policy views and *therefore* like him as a candidate? And what of party identification—does the fact that a voter is a strong Republican cause him (say) to approve of a Republican candidate, or does that voter's approval of the Republican candidate make the voter a strong Republican? Angus Campbell and his associates maintain the former—that *party identification* causes *partisan attitude:* V.O. Key maintains the latter—that *partisan attitude* causes *party identification*. This is not a trivial question, because if his being a Democrat or Republican leads a voter to decide on the issues, we might view him as a relatively *automatic* decision-maker; if from the issues he decides whether to become a Democrat, Republican, or Independent, we might view him as a relatively *rational* decision-maker.

Besides partisan attitudes and party identification, there are still other factors that determine how a person will vote. These other factors were suggested by Arthur Goldberg:

- the voter's social background (his father's social class);
- the voter's socialization (his father's party identification); and
- the voter's status (his social class).

According to Goldberg, these factors are *mediated* by the voter's partisan attitudes and party identification.

In other words, a person's vote is causally linked to his partisan attitudes plus his party identification. And his partisan attitudes and his party identification are *in turn* linked to his social background, socialization, and status. In short, social background + socialization + status → partisan attitudes + party identification → voting behavior. This formula accounts for half of the variation in the vote. Thus, it is a very powerful theory indeed—but still a fair distance from completely explaining voting behavior.

Now, these general studies of electoral decision-making are not very helpful in explaining what role foreign policy plays in determining how a person will vote. Those few studies of foreign policy's effect on the vote, moreover, are suggestive rather than conclusive.

George Belknap and Angus Campbell have studied the relationship between the way a person plans to vote (far in advance of an election) and that person's attitudes about foreign policy. In one investigation, they found that when President Truman's public image was at its worst (according to public-opinion trends), there was a strong relationship between a person's *satisfaction* with a party's foreign policy and his voting intention. That is, if a voter approved of Truman's foreign policy, that voter was likely to vote for the forthcoming Democratic candidate in 1952, whoever he might be.

According to Donald Stokes's estimate, the Republican landslide in 1952 in part reflected the voters' dissatisfaction with the Democratic administration's handling of foreign policy—*and* with its performance in general. The Republicans and General Eisenhower *netted* about 3.5 percent of the 1952 vote from foreign-policy attitudes and 5.5 percent from attitudes related to the general performance by the Democratic administration. Clearly then, foreign policy is a significant factor in determining how people will vote—or at least it was in 1952, when the Korean War was still being fought.

Unfortunately, since Belknap and Campbell did not investigate how voters felt about domestic issues, and since when they made their study the voters did not know that Stevenson and Eisenhower would be the candidates, their study does not help us assess the importance of foreign policy in relation to *other* influences on the vote (e.g., domestic issues and the candidates themselves).

Before leaving this brief summary of their 16-year-old study, one more item of interest should be noted. Belknap and Campbell constructed a four-step "dove-hawk" scale (from "get out of Korea and stay out" to "invade China"), and found remarkably equal percentages of all four scale-types, from doves to hawks, among those planning to vote Democratic, those planning to vote Republican, and among those who had not made up their minds for whom to vote.

Thus, they discovered that a person's *policy preferences* were *not* related to his voting intention. This remarkable finding—taken together with the finding that a person's satisfaction with a party's foreign policy *is* related to his voting intention—suggests (and only suggests) that *a person's vote more nearly reflects his reaction to a party's past performance on an issue rather than his desire to give a mandate for a new policy direction.*

The Democrats as the War Party

Warren E. Miller has focused on the net percentage of the vote that the Republicans have been gaining or losing from voters' foreign-policy attitudes, and from the picture of the Democrats as the "party of war."

From 1952 to 1964, the Republicans' net gain from foreign policy declined from 3.5 percent to –0.5 percent. This shift was accompanied by an exponential rise in the percentage of those who thought the Dem-

KEEPING US OUT OF WAR
Evaluation of Parties' Capability in Keeping the U.S. Out of War or a Bigger War (Table 3)

Problem would be handled*	1956	1960	Year 1964	1966	1968
Better by Democrats	7%	15%	38%	11%	12%
Same by both parties	45	46	46	57	55
Better by Republicans	40	29	12	15	17
Don't know	7	8	4	17	16
Not ascertained	1	2	—	—	—

Sources: Warren Miller, "Voting and Foreign Policy," in James Rosenau, ed., *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy;* Wolfe, *op. cit.* The 1968 data are from the Stanford/Pittsburgh Survey, New York: Free Press (1967).
* The question used in these five surveys reads, "Now looking ahead, do you think the problem of keeping out of a war [1964 & 1966, 'a bigger war'] would be handled better in the next four years by the Republicans, or by the Democrats, or about the same by both?"

ocrats *better* "able to keep us out of war." And since, from 1956 to 1964, the percentage believing the two parties *equally* capable of keeping us out of war remained about 46 percent, the improved image of the Democrats was entirely at Republican expense. Table 3 documents these trends, and also shows the dramatic change that has taken place since 1964. In 1968, only 12 percent of the voters think that the Democrats are better at keeping us out of war—as compared with 38 percent in 1964, and as compared with 17 percent thinking that the Republicans are better. Yet although the Democrats have lost ground since 1964, their loss has not proved much of a gain for the Republicans.

V.O. Key, writing about the 1952 election, tells us: ". . . the conclusion is inescapable that the election marked no majority rejection of the major trends of domestic policy under the New Deal and the Fair Deal. . . . The major content of the electoral decision related to the performance of the Truman administration in the field of foreign policy." Key's data appear in Tables 4 and 5.

1956 Presidential vote in relation to voters' party identification & to opinion about party capability in handling the "problem of keeping out of war" (Table 4)

Party Identification	Better by Democrats	Same by Both	Better by Republicans
	Voting Democratic	Voting Democratic	Voting Democratic
Strong Democrat	87%	90%	47%
Weak Democrat	96	71	24
Independent	—	42	11
Weak Republican	—	14	2
Strong Republican	—	—	—

Source: V.O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy.*

Table 5 also illustrates a point that Philip E. Converse states quite succinctly: ". . . the actual vote in any election, although influenced by short-term forces, is still largely determined by [the] distribution of [party loyalties]."

Table 5 offers some data for resolving this apparent disagreement between Key and Converse. The table shows that, of strong Democrats who said they did not know whether the Truman administration was responsible for the loss of China, 84 percent voted for Stevenson. Of the strong Democrats who absolved the Truman administration, 89 percent voted for Stevenson. The respective percentages for weak Democrats were 66 percent and 67 percent.

Several questions immediately suggest themselves. Why was there so little difference between those who gave Don't Know responses and those who absolved the United States? The difference between strong Democrats was 5 percent; the difference between weak Democrats was 1 percent. Does this suggest that the loss of China was less significant for them than Key would have us believe? Was America's China policy not important to those Democrats who took the drastic step of voting Republican? If so, then Converse would seem to be correct—party identification is far more important in determining the votes of Democrats and Republicans than foreign policy is.

On the other hand, the defection rate among Democrats who thought the loss of China *was* our fault was far higher than among Democrats who were unsure or Democrats who absolved the United States. Since more Democrats-who-felt-the-loss-of-China-was-our-fault seemed to vote Republican as a consequence, was the issue more important for them than for the other two groups of Democrats?

In short, it would seem that both Key and Converse are partly right. Among Democrats and Republicans, foreign policy can determine votes—but mainly among those people whose own views are decidedly antagonistic to the party that they traditionally support. (Among Independents, of course, foreign policy can be decisive all across the board.)

Now let me try to relate all of this research to the 1968 election.

1952 Presidential vote in relation to voters' party identification & their opinion on U.S. responsibility for Communist capture of China (Table 5)

Party Identification	Opinion on China Policy* Our Fault	Don't Know	Nothing U.S. Could Do
	Voting Democratic	Voting Democratic	Voting Democratic
Strong Democrat	69%	84%	89%
Weak Democrat	40	66	67
Independent	28	20	45
Weak Republican	3	6	8
Strong Republican	1	0	0

Source: V.O. Key, *op. cit.*
* Opinion on China policy is represented by responses to the question: "Some people feel that it was our government's fault that China went Communist, others say there was nothing we could do to stop it. How do you feel about this?"

In the first place, what was true in 1952—that those Democrats who felt the United States was responsible for the loss of China were more likely to defect than other Democrats—was also true in 1956, but on another important aspect of foreign-policy performance. As Table 4 shows, in 1956 those Democrats who thought that the Republicans were "better able to keep us out of war" defected at a much higher rate than other Democrats. In both of these elections, of course, the Democrats lost.

We have only presumptive evidence on the role of foreign policy in the elections of 1960 and 1964. But the declining net percentage of the vote that the Republicans gained from voters' foreign-policy attitudes, and the Republicans' declining image as the "party of peace," offers fertile grounds for speculation about their defeats. We could also speculate about the possible impact on the 1968 election of the 26 percent drop, from 1964, in those voters who think the Democrats "better able to keep us out of a bigger war."

Parallels Between 1952 and 1968

But I really should not apologize for offering parallels between 1952 and the upcoming election. The foreign-policy issues in the more recent 1956, 1960, and 1964 elections were of less importance to the voters, so these elections were less like 1968 than 1952 was. (This may be surprising about 1964, but according to Stokes's data foreign policy was then one-fourth as important as domestic policy.) The fact that the 1952 election took place during the Korean War, of course, heightens the parallel between that election and the one approaching. But even more striking are the similarities in public opinion during the two periods. After the Korean War began, a similar decline in satisfaction with the "way President Truman is handling his job" set in. This decline in popularity was even more pronounced in President Johnson's case, but it hasn't reached the depth to which approval of Truman had sunk. Both curves, moreover, show a tendency to level off—President Johnson, at the time he withdrew from the race, enjoyed 10 percent to 15 percent more approval than President Truman.

The polls show that the public's negative appraisal of L.B.J.'s war performance is linked to their dissatisfaction with his overall performance. President Truman likewise suffered from a critical public reaction to the way he was "handling the Korean War." In 1952, this dissatisfaction transferred to the Democratic Party and Adlai Stevenson.

Will 1968 be a replay of 1952? Surely, a complete answer to this question will depend upon the voters' response to the Paris negotiations and to the state of the union. But we already know some of the ingredients of the answer.

Let us examine the public's partisan attitudes in 1952. At that time, the Democrats drew a slight advantage from the voters' favorable evaluation of their domestic policy. They scored even better from being seen as benefiting such groups as "the working man" and "the Negro." But in the other categories—foreign policy, general performance of the party, and candidate image—the Democrats suffered badly. They suffered particularly from the combination of voters' attitudes toward foreign policy and their perception of General Eisenhower. As Campbell and his colleagues point out, "for many of his supporters, the Eisenhower appeal was very largely in terms of his presumed ability to handle [the] problem of foreign policy, specifically the Korean War. . . . The voters found it much easier to associate him favorably with their concern over the international crisis than they did Governor Stevenson. For a great many voters, it was the happy combination of the man and the hour." It is far from clear how the Democrats will rate on these factors next month. But let's review the record, as far as we know it, as it now stands.

On overall performance, since the sharp drop in favorable public opinion preceding the 1966 elections, President Johnson held a small advantage until June of 1967. Since then, he's been slightly behind. The Paris negotiations, and the limitation of the bombing of North Vietnam, reversed a two-year trend, but still not much more than 40 percent of the voters approved of the way Johnson was handling the war.

Evaluation of the President's handling of the war among Democrats has paralleled the evaluation of voters generally. However, Johnson has enjoyed about 9 percent more approval of his Vietnam performance from identifiers with his own party than from the nation. Beyond this, the response among Democrats to the changes in the war after Johnson's March 31 withdrawal speech has been more positive than past trends would have led us to expect.

It is beginning to look as if the war has become a partisan issue. That is to say, a person's approval or disapproval of the Democratic administration's Vietnam performance is more a result of that issue's being incorporated into the wider set of his partisan attitudes than of his independent assessment of the administration's performance. In this regard, it is instructive to note that, in June, while the nation at large was evenly split (41 percent: 41 percent: 18 percent) on the question of whether Vice-President Humphrey or Richard Nixon could deal better with Vietnam, 62 percent of the Democrats thought the Vice-President could do a better job, and 74 percent of the Republicans gave Nixon the nod. Apparently party identification was still quite high. We do not have the data to judge

whether this is temporary, or the beginning of a trend. If it is a trend, the significance of Vietnam in the voting decision will be reduced. If it is temporary, and dissatisfaction with the Johnson administration's Vietnam performance grows (as the most recent polls indicate), we can expect a substantial number of Democrats to vote contrary to their basic party loyalty. And if the trend away from "strong" party identifications continues, we can expect the rate of defections among Democrats to go up correspondingly. Taken together, these two phenomena could compound the problem of getting Democrats who disapprove of the administration's Vietnam performance to vote for Hubert Humphrey.

The problem that Humphrey faces in attracting Independent voters who think the Vietnam issue both important and badly handled is the same as his problem with Democratic loyalists—only more so. Among Independents, the percentage approving of President Johnson's handling of the war has been about 5 percent below the national figures. This disparity carries over to judgments about whether the Vice-President could do a better job of dealing with the war. Only 35 percent of the self-styled Independents thought that Humphrey could do a better job than Nixon—six points below the national percentage. In past elections, as Tables 4 and 5 show, most Independents who thought the Republicans could do a better job in foreign policy, or who thought that the Democratic administration was responsible for a foreign-policy failure, did *not* vote Democratic.

As the situation looks now, on general and foreign-policy performance the Republicans are showing an advantage. The Democrats may again, as they did before 1964, give ground to the Republican Party in these two areas.

The images of the candidates are largely a mystery. From the Gallup Poll and our own surveys, it appears that the public is not wildly enthusiastic about either of the candidates and, more to the point, reactions to the candidates are along partisan lines.

Whether or not the state of the economy can be counted as a plus for Humphrey is a matter of controversy. Whether other components of domestic policy will continue to redound to the Democrats' advantage —considering the riots, for example—is more problematic still. But the Democrats seem to have retained their past advantage as the perceived benefactors of such groups as the aged, the black, and those with less income and those with less education.

All of this uncertainty makes prediction hazardous to the point of damn foolishness.

Our formula for voting behavior leaves us without a conclusion about the outcome next month, largely because we lack data on several of the critical factors included in that formula. This same lack of data bars a definitive conclusion on the role of the Vietnam issue. But it seems clear that "satisfaction with the way Vietnam has been handled" is the attitude whose distribution in the electorate will determine the role played by the Vietnam issue in the election. Unfortunately, direct assessment of this attitude by pollsters ceased in April.

How Public Opinion Might Have Changed

This lack of data leaves us free to speculate about two ways that public opinion might have changed since April. On the one hand, it can be argued that the Paris negotiations improved the public's assessment of the administration's performance in Vietnam—that negotiations equal success. On the other hand, the Paris talks can be considered one of many past administration actions that only temporarily changed the direction of public opinion. Unless the Paris negotiations reach some early settlement (a cease fire, a large-scale exchange of prisoners, a stop to bombing north of the demilitarized zone coupled with an end to the shelling of Saigon), public disapproval of the administration's Vietnam performance might increase.

There is some evidence for each possibility. Before April, bombing north of the D.M.Z. was supported by most Americans. In February, we had found 46 percent of our respondents in favor of increasing the bombing and 19 percent in favor of doing what we were then doing; only 18 percent favored stopping the bombing. This distribution of opinion was virtually identical with what we found in 1967. The Gallup Poll results have paralleled our findings. This evidence would lead one to conclude that most Americans favored the bombing, and that this opinion was stable.

But in April this changed abruptly. After the President's speech, the Gallup Poll found 64 percent of the voters supporting the decision to stop the bombing, and a substantial increase in approval of the way the war was handled. There can be little doubt that the onset of the Paris talks reinforced this; for at least two years, nine Americans in ten have favored negotiations.

The question remains whether the dramatic changes in April will persist until November. It has happened before. The test-ban treaty of 1963 radically reduced the public's estimate of the likelihood of war; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 convinced many who favored integration that the fight was won. Dramatic policy milestones have sometimes had a lasting effect on attitudes—symbolic content is often more important than practical consequences.

Yet this is not always the case. It certainly was not the case with the negotiations in the Korean War. Negotiations began in Korea in July 1951. At that

time, the steady decline in approval of the way President Truman was handling his job was interrupted, and for a few months public approval grew. This was followed by an abrupt downturn, then a gradual rise and leveling off. Negotiations were recessed in October 1952—15 months after they had begun and just before the election. Throughout the negotiations at Panmunjon, although at a reduced pace, fighting continued and casualties were suffered. We do not know which of these elements was important as far as the 1952 election was concerned: Would the Republican margin have been greater still if negotiations had not been under way? Did the length of time between the onset of negotiations and Election Day prove crucial? Did the fact that the fighting and dying continued contribute to the Republicans' net advantage from foreign policy?

The year 1952 is an example of the operation of the second possibility, that administration actions may have only temporary effects on the voters. The length of time since the action, and its success, are the keys to the persistence of its effects. The onset of negotiations in 1968, like other abrupt changes in the course of the war in Vietnam, led to a suspension of critical feelings. For the public, hope springs eternal—and the President appears to have a supply of "second chances" limited only by the arrival of Election Day. As the fighting continues during negotiations, we might expect a decline in public approval as the public again focuses on the results of the fighting—casualties, for example—and not the tactics by which the war is being fought at the moment.

With respect to public opinion on Vietnam, as J.S. Milstein and W.C. Mitchell have shown, four factors have been strongly related to public approval or disapproval. These are (1) our leaders' announced decision on whether to increase or decrease the war effort; (2) a similar decision on the part of North Vietnam's leaders; (3) the ratio of battle casualties on the two sides; and (4) the level of effort made by the South Vietnamese army. Over the last two years, when our leaders have taken a hard line, they have tended to lose public support; when Hanoi's leaders have taken a hard line, our leaders have tended to gain public support. When our casualties have increased relative to those of the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong, the public has responded negatively. But the public responds positively when the South Vietnamese increase their efforts. Thus, to increase support of the administration, the optimal picture would be a softening of our line, which is reciprocated by Hanoi, coupled with a drop in casualties, and the South Vietnamese taking a more active role. The Paris talks can have a great deal to do with the first three of these factors. And if the public is still assessing success and failure, the progress of the Paris talks will be reflected in the election.

But there is still a month to go before the election: What would be the likely effect of some last-minute success? While there is no direct evidence on the subject, William Caspary has shown that voters' current attitudes are strongly related to their reactions to current events, plus a "discounted" accumulation of memories of past events. This would argue that a combination of the administration's public approval at the moment, and a discounted residual of the trend, would be more strongly related to voting behavior than either factor alone. It would argue, also, that the longer a step-up in approval is delayed when the trend is downward, the greater the rise in approval will have to be if it is to overcome the cumulative effect of the downtrend.

If the "Caspary Effect" is characteristic of Vietnam opinion, the timing of any administration action (like ending the bombing of North Vietnam) would be tricky indeed. If it comes too early and does not succeed, it will contribute to the downtrend. If it comes too late for its consequences to be noted, the accumulated downtrend can outweigh the positive increment.

The role of Vietnam in the coming election is still highly uncertain. As we have seen, issues are by no means the most important determinant of the vote; rather, they take care of what's left over after party identifications have determined the decisions of most voters, and the personal qualities of the candidates have attracted many of the rest. But even after these non-issue processes have "worked their magic," there are still enough issue-voters to cause a landslide to one side or the other.

Vietnam and its domestic ramifications are *the* issues for 1968; we will know their full impact only in retrospect. After November we will know whether the unfolding of the war caused a defection from the Democratic Party of strong and weak Democrats, or whether it caused Democrats to stick and, like 1964, caused Republicans to switch. "After November" is soon enough for scientists; it will, of course, be too late for politicians.

FURTHER READINGS SUGGESTED BY THE AUTHOR:

Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy edited by James N. Rosenau (New York: Free Press, 1967). The best compilation of what is known of the link between public opinion and foreign policy. It includes an article by Warren Miller essaying the electoral impact of foreign-policy issues.

The American Voter by Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1960). This book is the classic statement of the political-social-psychological theory of voting.

Presidential Elections by Nelson W. Polsby and Aaron Wildavsky (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968). This is a highly accessible book that thoroughly describes the process of selecting and electing Presidential candidates.